UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1997/845
31 October 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 31 OCTOBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to enclose the text of a message, which I delivered to the Secretary-General on 28 October 1997, relating to an initiative on the part of the Government of the United Kingdom to invite representatives of the United Nations to Scotland to discuss the arrangements for a trial of the two Lockerbie suspects in Scotland so that this matter might be resolved as soon as possible in a manner consistent with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Similar messages have been passed to the Secretaries-General of the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States.

I should be grateful if you would have the present document and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) John WESTON
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Text of a message dated 28 October 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Government of the United Kingdom is deeply concerned at the continued failure of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to comply with the requirements of Security Council resolutions 731 (1992), 748 (1992) and 883 (1993) relating to the Lockerbie bombing. These resolutions require the Government of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to comply with the requests to surrender the two Libyans accused for trial in Scotland or the United States of America. The United Kingdom is determined to seek progress, in accordance with these resolutions, so that justice can be done, and be seen to be done, for the 270 victims of Lockerbie.

The United Kingdom welcomes the interest shown by the international community in an early resolution of this issue. We understand the concern that the trial of the two suspects must be demonstrably fair and free from prejudice. There exist comprehensive safeguards under Scottish law which meet this concern fully. To demonstrate this fact, we would welcome the presence of international observers from the United Nations at the trial of the suspects in Scotland. Observers will have full access to the suspects before and during the trial (if the suspects agree), will be able to witness all the court proceedings and will be provided with administrative and reporting facilities.

So that we may brief the United Nations Secretariat on the safeguards to ensure a fair trial and discuss how international observers may best be accommodated in the court proceedings, we cordially invite you to send two representatives to Scotland as soon as is convenient for you. If your chosen representatives are persons with experience of legal procedures, you may subsequently wish to appoint them as observers at the trial. They will visit Scottish prison and court facilities and meet United Kingdom representatives to discuss the modalities of a trial in Scotland in the presence of international observers.

We will be happy to arrange this visit as soon as possible. I should add that this invitation is also being extended to the Secretaries-General of the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States.